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The Established Sunnah of Entering Sujud by Placing Either the Knees or Hands Down First in Salat (salah)

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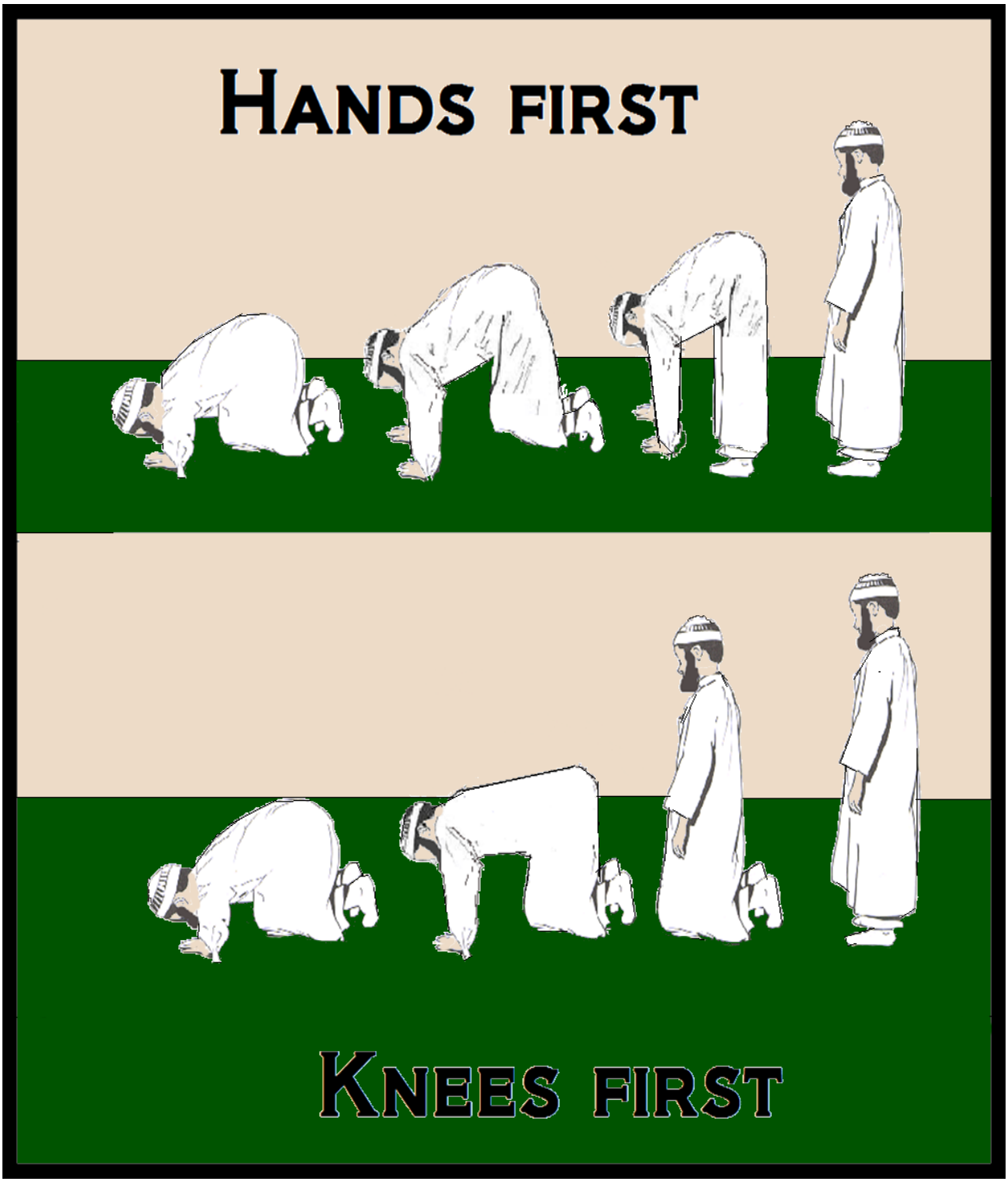
In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

The prophetic ahadith depict the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) entering sujud in various manners; as such, the scholars of Islam have differed regarding the ideal manner in which one should go down in sujood while performing salat. Some are of the opinion that one should enter sujud by placing the hands down first, while other are of the belief that one should place the knees down first. Nevertheless, scholars such as Shaykh al-Islam, Ibn Taymiyah, maintains that praying in either manner is permissible; thus, if a Muslim performing salat

elects to enter sujud with either their knees first or hands first, their prayer will be deemed valid in either case; and Allah knows best!



Likewise, the evidence for entering sujud with the knees coming into contact with the ground before the hands is the hadith of Abu Dawud wherein Waa'il ibn Hajar narrated: "**I saw the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.), when he did sujud placing his knees down (on the ground) before his hands, and when he got up he raised his hands before his knees**." This is the position accepted by the Hanafi, Shafi'i and Hanbali Madhabs. However, the Maliki Madhab prefers prostrating with the hands touching the ground before the knees. The evidence supporting the Maliki Madhab's position is the hadith of Abu Dawud wherein Abu Huraira narrated: "**The Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) said 'When one of you prostrates, he should not kneel as the animal kneels; instead, he should place his hands down before his knees**.'" In light of the above mentioned perspectives, it is worth reiterating that Shaykh al-Islam, Ibn Taymiyah (RA), in Al-Fataawa (22/449) reportedly said: "Praying in both ways is permissible, according to the consensus of the scholars. If a person wants to go down knees first or hands first, his prayer is valid in either case, according to the consensus of the scholars, but they disputed as to which is preferable." Furthermore, Shaykh Bin Baz (RA) is also of the opinion that: "As for going down on knees before the hands when prostrating, it is the better practice based on the hadith of Wa'il Ibn Hujr in this regard as well as other hadith to the same effect.

However, some scholars view that one should go down on the hands before the knees is based on the hadith of Abu Hurayrah in this regard. Nevertheless, there is a good range of flexibility in this respect. Thus, the salah will be valid whether one goes down on the knees before the hands or the contrary. However, dispute is on which practice is better. The sound opinion is that it is better to go down on the knees before the hands due to the above mentioned evidence. Nevertheless, if someone goes down on the hands before the knees, it will be unobjectionable and their salah will be valid. Furthermore, regarding the hadith of Abu Hurayrah which prohibits one from offering salah by kneeling down like a camel does not contradict the hadith of Wa'il. Rather, they coincide with each other; because, a camel kneels down on its hands before its legs. As for the statement concluding the hadith of Abu Hurayrah: (He should place his hands (on the ground) before placing his knees,) it is more likely, according to many hadith scholars, to be mistakenly misreported by some narrators. However, the right order of words is: (He should place his knees (on the ground) before placing his hands.) Thus, the first part of the hadith would go in line with the concluding part and thus the two hadith of Wa'il and that of Abu Hurayrah can be reconciled and the dispute may be removed. May Allah grant us success."